



Brownfields Showcase Community Milwaukee, WI

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

Brownfields are abandoned, idled or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived contamination. In May 1997, Vice President Gore announced a Brownfields National Partnership to bring together the resources of more than 15 federal agencies to address local cleanup and reuse issues in a more coordinated manner. In 1998, this multi-agency partnership designated 16 "Brownfields Showcase Communities"—models demonstrating the benefits of collaborative activity on brownfields. In October 2000, the partnership selected 12 additional "Brownfields Showcase Communities" to continue the success of the initiative. The Brownfields Showcase Communities are distributed across the country and vary by size, resources, and community type. A wide range of support will be leveraged, depending on the particular needs of each Showcase Community.

BACKGROUND

The Brownfields National Partnership has selected Milwaukee, Wisconsin as a Brownfields Showcase Community. The city is focusing its brownfields efforts on mothballed properties in the Menomonee Valley, located in the heart of the city and adjacent to the region's largest pockets of unemployment. The area has been designated a Federal Enterprise Community. According to 1990 Census data, 39 percent of area residents live below the poverty line and median income is less than half the state's average.

The mothballing issue is a growing concern for community redevelopment, as cities find key properties blocked from reuse. The State of Wisconsin's new "cost recovery" statute adopted in early 2000 gives the city bargaining power in negotiations with owners of mothballed properties and is expected to remove many of the barriers to

redeveloping these sites. Milwaukee has begun to use this authority to cleanup and redevelop private sites. The city is making progress through engaging community organizations and forming partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

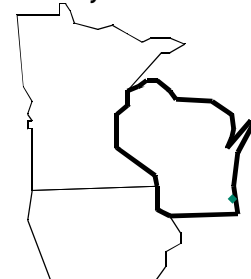
In 1998, Milwaukee identified 68 vacant or underutilized parcels located in the Menomonee Valley that had suspected environmental contamination. Based on a market analysis, approximately 200

acres were identified as priority areas. The city is targeting six properties located in these areas. In recent years, Milwaukee has undertaken the following activities throughout the city:

- Helped to fund environmental testing and/or cleanups as part of the successful

redevelopment of 44 projects. These efforts led to a variety of new uses that created or retained 1,604 jobs and leveraged more than \$199 million

Community Profile



Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The City of Milwaukee is targeting the cleanup and redevelopment of "mothballed" brownfields. Mothballed properties are privately owned and deliberately idled due to environmental concerns. Wisconsin's innovative "cost recovery" statute, adopted in early 2000, gives the city new bargaining power in negotiations with owners of these properties and is being looked to as a potential model for other communities.

in private investment. Forty of these projects are private developments.

- Completed Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments on 13 properties in the Menomonee Valley.
- Developed a “public conversations” process to obtain input from local health groups, environmental organizations, neighborhood associations, business groups, property owners, and developers on the city’s brownfields cleanup and redevelopment activities.

Milwaukee has formed partnerships with federal, state, and local entities to address brownfields issues. Partnerships include:

- EPA, which awarded Milwaukee a Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot with a supplemental award, a Job Training Pilot, an Alternative Dispute Resolution Pilot, and a Sustainable Development Challenge Grant;
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which designated Milwaukee as a Federal Enterprise Community;

- State agencies, including the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Wisconsin Department of Commerce; and
- Community groups, including the 16th Street Community Health Center, Valley Park Civic Association, and Merrill Park Neighborhood Association.

SHOWCASE COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Milwaukee plans to use the Showcase Community project to conduct site investigations on prioritized mothballed properties once the city obtains an access agreement. Using the state’s new cost recovery law, the city will continue efforts to take ownership of private properties for brownfields cleanup and redevelopment. Milwaukee is also developing an area-wide approach to groundwater management in the Menomonee Valley that will complement the city’s brownfields strategy.

Milwaukee’s innovative approach to addressing mothballed properties will serve as a national model for other cities facing the challenges of bringing these properties into productive reuse.

Contacts

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For more information on the Brownfields Showcase
Communities, visit the EPA Brownfields Web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/showcase.htm>.